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Although the Chilean child of the 19th century read the same things as the European child, he was also acquainted with the fairy tales of his native land. In 1912, Robert Lenz published collections of Chilean stories and stated that they were highly suitable as children's reading matter. Thus, Lenz laid the foundations for a native Chilean children's literature. His collections, and others made by prominent foklorists, inspired numerous publications. The tales of Blanca Santa Cruz, for instance, are written in a clear and pithy style and retain the formulae for openings ("There was once upon a time . . . once upon a time there was") and the "chacharachas" or "rhyming prattle" of the conclusions. Ernesto Montenegro combines his interest in foklore with his talents as a creative writer in the production of his superior collections. Looking toward the future, Antonio Acevedo Hernandez indicates that such adventures as the exploration of the Amazon River could also be used as the basis for young people's books. (JS)

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Carmen Bravo Villasante:

THE HISTORY OF JUVENILE LITERATURE IN CHILE

The Chilean child of the 19th century read much the same things as the Spanish and European child. A good deal in the way of school books, a good deal of selection by the teacher, and when adults left the child any free time he spent it in kite flying and "rayuela" (throwing coins to land on or near a line drawn on the ground) and in reading *Robinson Crusoe* for his own amusement. In that valuable book of childhood memories *El loco Estero* (The crazy little brook), Alberto Blest Gana tells us that at that time the whole sky of Chile was furrowed with lightly built kites, three and four together, and special regulations had to be issued to prevent children from such excesses of kite flying, from going up into house roofs (where they were likely to have accidents) and from quarreling in the streets when the kite strings got intertwined.

One of the protagonists of the story, a poor husband condemned to a perpetual state of childhood, finds an escape from his misfortunes by reading two children's books: *El Chileno consolado en su presidio* (The Chilean consoled in his prison) and *Robinson Crusoe.*

Kite flying and rayuela, fables, sentimental stories and Robinsonades were the reading matter of the Chilean child, together with some selected works of well known poets.

The Chilean child which ran about the streets of the quiet cities, jeopardizing their last century calm, was like the Argentine child and the Columbian child. He was all ears. If he sat down it was to listen to fairy-tales, popular stories, and horrific accounts of apparitions, witchcraft and demons. In *El loco Estero* Blest Gana tells of the surprise and wonderment of the young heroes of the book when at table they listen to accounts of war-like deeds and hear the word "enemy" used in this connection. He writes: "Until then the word 'enemy' for them had meant only the devil, the dreadful monster of servants' tales, the terror of childhood."

These children were nurtured on tales of fear, as were children all over the world, including those Mexican children at the end of the last century whose adult recollections subsequently contained nothing in the way of children's literature except the tales and legends told by their servants.

Fortunately, anybody writing their childhood memories nowadays is in a position to include some examples of children's literature.

From Spain there arrived in large numbers the stories of Callaja and a whole range of books from the same publisher. Jules Verne was a favourite. As far as children's magazines are concerned *El Peneca* (The Kid) founded almost at the beginning of the century by Roxane (Elvira Santa Cruz) thrilled all children until it was replaced by publications of North American origin, in the form of translations or serial adaptations of Little Lulu and various Disney

productions etc. The pioneer of the children's press was Elvira Santa Cruz, who dedicated her life to children and devoted herself to founding schools and holiday homes and making collections of stories.
In Chile, as elsewhere, the work of folklorists and of school teachers will be seen to have had a strong influence on the origin and development of children's literature.

The great figure of Roberto Lenz headed a movement which was of high importance for childhood. In 1912 he published a small volume of *Cuentos de adivinanzas* (Stories with riddles) and another book entitled *Un grupo de consejas chilenas* (A collection of Chilean fairy-tales) which is a comparative study on story writing and has an introduction on the origin and dissemination of popular tales. Lenz classifies stories into fairy-tales, popularly known as "consejas", traditional stories or historical legends, and stories with a moral.
In his analysis of these "consejas" Lenz, who is an expert on child psychology, makes the following trenchant observations:

> The psyche of the child corresponds to the psychological condition of primitive and uncultured man. It is therefore easy to see why the subjects which once were the serious concern of all adults have now become in advanced and refined culture the concern of the child. However, "super-civilized" man became incapable of appreciating the enchantments of the fairy-tale, and there has been no lack of narrow minded pedagogues who have considered it harmful to allow children to read these old stories and fables, on the grounds that they are contrary to fact and hence will pervert the child's critical faculties.
>
> How little these "realists" know the soul of the child, who spurns a doll capable of speaking and closing its eyes and prefers to wrap up a bit of stick or a shoe in a rag and dandle it as its favourite plaything. The imagination is not an aberration of logical thought but a vital faculty of the human psyche; it is the mother not only of the arts but also of the sciences. The man of genius is distinguished from the common individual much more by his superior imagination than by the greater force of his intellect.
> Failure to cultivate the imagination has for long been a serious fault of teaching.

After analysing the childish psyche and its characteristics, Lenz discusses the possibility of using folkloric themes as reading matter, and considers them to be highly suitable:

> The most recent progress made in teaching is due to the official recognition of this truth, and both in the drawing class and in linguistic composition class an effort is now made, and is being crowned with success, to replace imitative reproduction by an act of creation. And among the tasks most likely to promote the child's literary capacities is that of writing down the old fairy-stories. We therefore recommend this procedure to teachers of Spanish in order to provide the child with a useful exercise and to ensure the preservation of folkloric material.

> There is not much likelihood that the children will write stories invented by themselves. The very fidelity with which the popular memory retains and transmits virtually unchanged the same stories down the centuries in fact constitutes the best proof that only a few, a very few, individuals are capable of inventing anything original.
> Leaving aside the large cities, where during recent years the little books of stories in the Calleja collection have enjoyed a certain popularity among the pupils of secondary schools, practically no Chilean child has read fairy-tales; the popular stories of Spain have never been brought together in the manner of the fairy-tales collected in Germany by the brothers Grimm, which are today to be found, at least in abridged editions, in all the families and in the hands of all the middle class children in that country.

Lenz, with his criticism and his original works laid the foundations of children's literature in Chile. And in this connection it should always be remembered that he is a folklorist.

Lenz quotes as worthy of attention the *Narraciones araucanas* (Araucanian tales) by Fray Flix José Augusta (1940), which the latter collected among the Mapuche Indians, although the majority are of Spanish origin.

Julio Vicuña Cifuentes (1865—1936), like R. Lenz, was an enthusiast for Chilean folklore and a scientific researcher intent on collecting every kind of folkloric material available in the country. Apart from anthologizing ballads and popular poetry, he also collected tales and traditional stories. His most important work is *La poesia popular chilena* (Chilean popular poetry) which possesses numerous features of value for children.

Ramón A. Laval published in 1910 *Los cuentos chilenos de nunca acabar* (Chilean tales that never end) and later the *Tradiciones, leyendas y cuentos recogidos de la tradición oral en Carahué* (Traditions, legends and stories collected from oral tradition in Carahué; 1920). His *Cuentos populares en Chile* (Popular stories in Chile; 1923) opened up vast horizons for the child reader, although they require some selection. They represent a rich literary vein which should be exploited by teachers, in the same way as the collection of popular Spanish stories by Aurelio Espinosa can and should be used in Spain. The *Cuentos de Pedro de Urdamalas* (Stories of Peter the Plotter; 1925) which are so widespread in Spanish-American folklore, have been published by Ramón A. Laval.

The work of these prominent folklorists rightly awakened interest in everything Chilean, giving rise to numerous and interesting publications such as the *Cuentos para niños* (Tales for children; 1936), based on Chilean and international folklore, the *Cuentos chilenos* by Blanca Santa Cruz Ossa and the *Leyendas y cuentos araucanos* (Araucanian Legends and Tales) which, as the author said, were inspired by the work of the best historians and folklorists and by native tradition.

Written in the succinct language of by-gone days, these very attractive and interesting stories recall memories and the atmosphere of native cultures.

El gran Caupolicán (Great chief Caupolicán), *El viejo Latrapay* (Old Latrapay), *Las tres hermanas* (The three sisters), *El mapuche Bodadsa* (Bodadsa the Mapuche), *La culebra Treng Treng y la culebra Kaikai* (Snake Treng Treng and snake Kaikai) are, perhaps, the tales which most strongly evoke the essence of the Chilean spirit.

The sober, clear and pithy style, the elevated level of the dialogue and the colour of the narrative make them attractive and very suitable for children. In the introduction to *Cuentos chilenos* Blanca Santa Cruz says that the stories had remained engraved in her memory since her childhood:

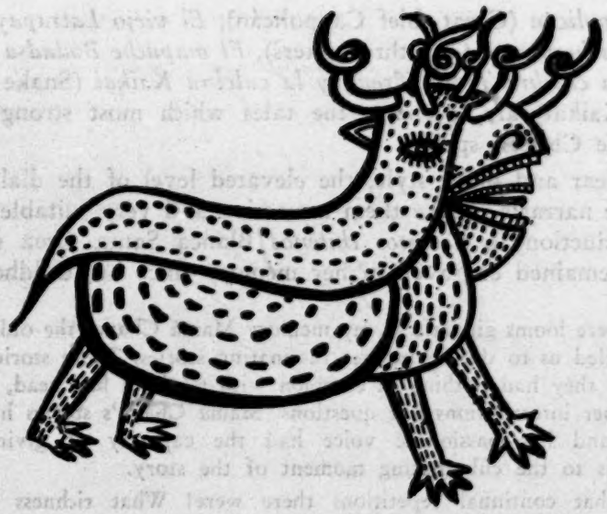
> Thus there looms gigantic in my memory Mamá Chayo, the old servant nurse, who lulled us to sleep with her fascinating stories. Those stories were unique for me; they had nothing in common with stories I had read, which allowed of neither interruptions nor questions. Mamá Chayo's stories had the ring of truth, and her passionate voice had the capacity of giving the proper emphasis to the culminating moment of the story.
>
> And what continual repetitions there were! What richness of expressions formed in the mouth of the people! No story could begin without the traditional "Once upon a time" and its several variations, and there then followed the endless chacharachas, strings of words without meaning and partly rhyming, which either made us laugh or made us impatient because the story was held up.

The oral origin of the stories collected by Blanca Santa Cruz is quite clear. Mamá Chayo had her being in the children's magazine *El Peneca* for many years, when the author, under this pseudonym, told the stories to children.
By way of homage to Mamá Chayo Blanca Santa Cruz retains the set formulae for the openings and the "chacharachas" or rhyming prattle of the conclusions.
Take the beginning of *El tonto Perico* (Silly Pete):

> Para saber y contar y contar, y contar para saber. Pan con queso pa los tontos lesos, pan y harina pa ña Catalina; no le echo màs matutines pa deparlos pa los fines. Esto era un tonto de capirote que se llamaba Perico.
> (There was once upon a time ... once upon a time there was. Bread and cheese for silly people, bread and flour for Doña Catalina, I shall put in no more chacharachas in order to save them for the end. This fellow was a complete and utter idiot.)

And now the formula used at the end:

> Y aqui se acabé el cuento de Perico el tonto, y cada vez que lo cuento se rien hasta los muertos y salen delos cajones camino de Vichuquén, a caballito en el tren comiéndose un buen pequén.
>
> (And that's the end of the story of silly Pete, and every time I tell it there is laughter until the corpses come out of the coffins on the roads of Vichuquén, and ride in a train, eating a good meat pie.)



From *Historia y antologia de la literatura infantil iberoamericana* by C. Bravo-Villasante, illustrated by Pepi Sánchez.

Another story begins as follows:

> Cuando los chanchos volaban y las culebras andaban paradas ... (When pigs fly and snakes stand upright) and: Estera y esterita para sacar peritas, estera y esterones para sacar orejones, no le echo más chacharachas porque la vieja es muy lacha, ni le dejaré de echar porque de todo ha de llevar. Y estera una gallina chueca echada en quince huevos.
> (Mat and little mat to get little pears, mat and big mat to get big dried peaches, I shall say no more chacharachas because the old woman is very amorous, but neither shall I stop saying them because everything has to go in. And there was a crooked hen sitting on fifteen eggs.)

All these represent a kind of magic incantation to begin the story.

While exploiting the folkloric vein and the popular story-telling tradition, Ernesto Montenegro wrote his works in a quite different and more literary style. *Mi tio Ventura* (My uncle Ventura; 1938) is a collection of Chilean popular stories. In his explanatory introduction the author says that he wrote the stories in 1930 while on vacation on his estate in Aconcagua. When the book was placed on the curricula of schools, of university departments of Spanish-American literature and of the Pedagogical Institute, the author was surprised at the success it obtained.

The story-teller is a connoiseur of all Chilean fairy-tales, an old gentleman with a long memory who amuses himself by teaching children all he knows of

the tales of by-gone days, which he himself learned from his parents or from another story-loving relative.

Ernesto Montenegro was one of the children who listened to Tio Ventura and had only to revive his memories and commit the oral narration to paper.

The popular idioms which give such charm to the stories and the rustic character of the environment all have the effect that the tales of Tio Ventura are pleasing to children. The critic Alone considers this book to be superior to the folkloric collections of Ramón A. Laval and Vicuña Cifuentes. He writes:

> The liveliness of his portrayals never fades and maintains the reader's mind in a constant state of joy. There are in his tales at least three planes of enjoyment: underlying everything is the age-old story itself, the imaginative quality of the legend whose historical and traditional origins take us back to the remote past; then there is the popular adaptation of the material, and the part played by the Chilean native character, highlighting and illuminating, poking kindly fun, resigned and at the same time sly; and finally there is the spirit of the two story-tellers, the uncle and the nephew.

We all know that there is a basic difference between the folklorist and the creative writer. The former is a scientist who confines himself to collecting material, without adding or subtracting an iota. The latter adds and modifies and produces literature; his powers of invention are superimposed on tradition. Therein lies the value of the *Cuentos de mi tio Ventura:* they are popular stories written by a man of literature.

On the other hand, the *Cuentos folklóricos de Chile* (Tales from Chilean folklore; 1960) by Yolando Pino Saavedra belong to the best Chilean folkloric school, and by the richness and variety of the material, most of which can be read by and adapted for children, constitute a magnificent work.

The writer Antonio Acevedo Hernàndez prefaces his book *Leyendas chilenas* (Chilean legends; 1952) with an interesting introduction in which he tells us of his childhood reading. He mentions having read a spelling book of Sarmiento and the stories of Calleja:

> Talking of witches I have known Chilean witches; I have heard the prophetic song of the tué-tué, the mythical birds of Chilean witchcraft ... Have I told you that in company with other gay lads like myself I went in search of the City of Delight?

The City of Delight is a variation of the Never-Never-Land. The author, in another book entitled *La leyenda chilena como base de una literatura nacional* (Chilean legends as a basis for a national literature) considers that wonderful adventures in search of the Amazon, El Dorado and the Source of Invention could serve as inspiration for young people's books.